

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Wes Johnson
Director's Office
713-837-0002

Gary Norman
Director's Office
713-837-7425

City Public Works Department Works With Local Residents to Ease Traffic in Almeda Sinkhole Area

Thru-trucks and traffic routed around Almeda Plaza subdivision

The Traffic Engineering Branch of the City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department announced today a plan to manage the flow of traffic around the sinkhole that has formed in the 12200 block of Almeda. In response to concerns voiced by the residents of the Almeda Plaza subdivision adjacent to the sinkhole, the plan calls for commercial truck traffic and thru traffic on Almeda to be routed to the east and west while local non-commercial traffic is directed along a minimum of streets in the neighborhood.

The required route for south-bound commercial trucks on Almeda is to exit Almeda at Airport, drive east to Texas 288, south on Texas 288 to Almeda Genoa, west on Almeda Genoa to Almeda, and then once again south on Almeda. Northbound trucks are required to exit Almeda at West Orem, drive west to Hiram Clark, north on Hiram Clark to Holmes, and then east on Holmes back to Almeda. It is strongly advised that non-commercial thru vehicle traffic on Almeda follow the same route as that required of the commercial trucks.

Non-commercial traffic visiting the neighborhood and local businesses are asked to use a minimum of the neighborhood streets. Local southbound non-commercial traffic should exit Almeda at Almeda Plaza and proceed west, then make a U-turn at Mandalay and travel back east on Almeda Plaza to Kirkgard, then south on Kirkgard to Tidewater, then east on Tidewater to Almeda. Local northbound non-commercial traffic should exit Almeda and proceed west on Tidewater to Kirkgard, travel north on Kirkgard to Almeda Plaza, and then east on Almeda Plaza to Almeda.

Flashing, electronic changeable-message signs have been posted at West Orem and Airport to remind traffic of the route changes. It is expected that the traffic management plan will be in place for several more months as repair work moves forward on the sinkhole. The plan will be monitored and revised as needed to accommodate the progress of the repairs to the sinkhole and the associated utilities.

The Traffic Engineering Branch staff worked closely with City of Houston Council Member Ada Edwards, community leaders, the Almeda Plaza Civic Club and area local businesses to develop the traffic plan. Council Member Edwards stated, "Our office is dedicated to providing service to our constituents and helping them to form a partnership with their city government. Although certainly tragic, this incident has provided an opportunity for that partnership to be developed and nurtured at an even higher level."

When asked to comment on the route changes, Public Works and Engineering Deputy Director Jeff Taylor stated, "We think we have found an equitable solution that balances the traffic flow needs in the area with the safety and comfort of the local residents. Our goal is to minimize the traffic impacts brought on by the repair work."

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Currently the sinkhole is approximately 150-feet long, 95-feet wide and 20-feet deep. Crews continue to install bypass pumps and lines on the sanitary sewer line along Almeda and work to lower the water table in the area through the pumping of eight groundwater wells. Some asphalt has been removed from the site. After the ground is de-watered and stabilized, work crews will then proceed to excavate the site, assess the damage and proceed with repairs.

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